10

THE

# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND BRANCH

OF THE

# BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

*Delivered on June 23rd,* 1869,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING AT PENRITH,

BY

## MICHAEL W. TAYLOR, M.D., EDIN.,

PRESIDENT FOR THE YEAR.

PENRITH :
B. T. SWEETEN, PRINTER, "ADVERTISER" OFFICE.

1869.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30569242

TO THE

MEMBERS OF OUR BRANCH

OF THE

*BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,*

FOR WHOSE SAKES IT WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN,
AND AT THE REQUEST OF SOME OF WHOM, IT IS NOW PUBLISHED,

THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PENRITH,
JULY, 1869.

# ADDRESS, &C.

## I.

It is my first duty, medical brethren, to thank you most cordially for the honour of having been elected by you as your President for this most important branch of the British Medical Association ; and if I should fail in fulfilling to your satisfaction, all the duties and responsibilities connected with this position, it shall not be, at all events, from apathy and indifference, but from a lack of those endowments which the successful achievement of these duties requires.

I take this chair with diffidence from your first President, the venerable Dr. Barnes, whom we must all esteem as the patriarch of the profession in these counties ; and it must have been a pleasure to all who heard his address to you two months ago, to have noted the vigour of his memory, and the lightness with which he bears his more than octogenarian age.

On that occasion Dr. Barnes carried you back to the days when he himself began to study medicine, about the beginning of the present century ; he referred you to the far distant time when the doctrines of Brown had kindled a flame in the medical schools, both at home and abroad ; and he told you how they were divided into the Cullenian, and Brunonian factions—controversies well-nigh forgotten.

Gentlemen, having these observations of your late President in my mind, and as custom in these Inaugural Addresses, debars me from confining the remarks which may be expected from this chair, to a single special medical topic or theme, it has occurred to me that I might attempt to illustrate, by a historical glance (necessarily a very cursory and superficial one), some of the various changes that have prevailed in medical opinions.

During the brief space of time then wherein I am allowed the honour of addressing you, I will occupy some portion of it, by a retrospect, of the so called systems of medicine during the centuries next preceding our own ; with the view of showing in a stronger light, by force of antithesis as it were, the eclectic and rational principles and practice governing medicine at the present day.

As it is well for us to scan the stages in our own lives, so is it an advantage to take occasion to contemplate the early footsteps and development of our profession.

It is interesting for us, spectators as we are of the elevated position, and stately attitude of medical science in the nineteenth century,—regarding as we do, with filial pride the extended basis on which she stands—and the full-grown proportions which she has attained ;—it is well for us, I say, to look back to what she was in her infancy—to review the traits of her childhood—the myths, and phantasies, and conceits that she toyed with—her blind gropings at shadows and impostures—her bitterness and petulance on perceiving and discarding these delusions—her peering for the truth, and seeing it, "as but in a glass darkly."

One might, if so witted, have commenced at the mediæval period of alchemy, with Friar Bacon, and Basil Valentine, when the scholar and the charlatan in the same dark and murky labyrinths of speculative abstraction met on common ground, pursuing ideals how sublime, resulting in realities how paltry ! For, the restoration of health, and gold making, the elixir vitæ, and the philosopher's stone, were held as closely allied. But that epoch was but the starlit glimmer in the history of science. The discovery of truth, then, was about as hopeless, as the search after a lost brilliant in the moonless gloom of night. The last of the old alchemists was Paracelsus, the mightiest and most notorious of them all. But he fell : and his fall was the apotheosis of the system.

And here we may pause, and read a lesson from the life of this very paradigm and prototype of quackery. It will be of advantage for us to realize, of how little avail, were transcendant talents, impassioned energy, and soaring ambition, unless accompanied by truth, loyalty, and integrity. Verily, " the earth hath bubbles as the water hath," and he was of them. Ah ! Aureole Bombastes Paracelsus, your very surname has gone down to posterity, as a catchword for the embodiment of arrogance, boasting, and mendacity. It has been said, that history repeats itself in individuals ; so, in the proceedings of the founders of many of the quackeries of which we in our own day have been cognisant, we recognise unhappily the same feeling at all events, towards their predecessors and contemporaries, if not demonstrated so flagrantly, as animated the arch empiric, and juggling enthusiast of the 16th century. For mark his career. On his appointment at 33 years of age to fill the chair of chemistry at Basle, in 1526, he sounded, it is true, the fame of Hippocrates, but at the same time vaunted himself as superior to the Greek ; with a flourish of trumpets, he publickly burnt the books of Galen and Avicenna ; crying, that he was the sole monarch of physic, and that his shoe ties knew more than these two physicians ; and that all the Universities and writers together, were less instructed than the hairs of his beard. His confidence and pretentions drew a hustling crowd of pupils and of clients, for a time. But note the end. In little more than a year he raised such a storm in the little town, that he was hooted out of the market-place of Basle, and after a life of ceaseless wandering, from town to town, throughout Europe, the zealot, who professed the double secret, of transmuting metals, and prolonging the extent of life to several centuries, himself died in abject poverty, in an hospital, a crack-brained sot, in his 48th year. But even some good resulted to his own day and generation, from the erratic genius of this extravagant spirit. He was amongst the first who prosecuted *experimental* enquiry in medicine; a species of study, to which nothing analogous occurs in the history of former ages. He was the first to apply to the explanation of the processes within the body, in health and disease, and to Therapeutics, chemical considerations, which the school of Liebig has since consummated. He investigated, he experimentalised, he plodded at his multifarious manipulations. He set about searching for the essences, and quintessences of things, with the delusive hope of finding the alcahest or universal solvent; a type of study however which has ended in the discovery of our quinine, morphia, and a multitude of proximate principles ; yet he still held by the theories of the older alchemists, of salt, sulphur, and mercury, being the typical forms of elementary matter.

The next great system of medicine which arose was nearly a century after, under Van Helmont and Sylvius ; it was the school of the iatro chemists. It was a system of humoral pathology ; all diseases were referred to the acridity of the humours, which acrimony was supposed to be in some of an alkalescent nature, and in others, of an acid, and remedies according to this hypothesis were very much limited to the neutralization of one or other of these states. These ideas maintained their ground for upwards of half a century, and were received and supported by some of the greatest thinkers of the age. They were discussed by Descartes, Newton, Leibnitz, and Sydenham. But that school also had its day and generation. The impulse given to mathematical speculation, by these last named philosophers, and the dynamical calculations on the subject of the circulation of the blood, which occupied physicians, after Harvey's discovery, naturally inclined them to apply their science to medicine. These were the iatro-mathematicians. Borelli of Pisa was the founder of the sect, and his pupil Bellini followed up his views. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, these theories of the mechanicians had received their full development, and then in their turn vacated their pedestal.

For the illustrious Boerhaave arose, whose aphorisms became fully promulgated about the year 1700, doctrines which were destined to impress their character upon European medicine for half a century again. Boerhaave was not endowed with a creative or inventive genius, but rather with a mind fitted for analysis, comparison, and combination; at the same time he was a man of wonderful sagacity, and penetration, and extensive erudition. His mind may be regarded as the intellectual furnace, through which were fused and reduced to order, and purged of dross and grosser impurities, the crude materials afforded both by the observation and hypotheses of previous generations; but still he failed to reduce the ore completely, and he attached to it in the process, incongruities of his own. The crucible in which can be first detected, (if I may so apostrophize the simile), the ring of the true metal of our science, was supplied 60 years later, by the philosophic mind of Cullen, and the Edinburgh School.

Having been a natural philosopher, and a mathematician before he became a physician, Boerhaave was constantly carried away by the first object of his labour and research. He adopted the views of the mechanicians into his own system. Leewenhoeck by an indefatigable application of lenses to the frog's foot, had endeavoured to establish it as a fact, that the constituent principles of the blood consist of globular corpuscles, but that these corpuscles differ in size in a regular descending series, and that each set of corpuscles had a set of vessels for themselves just of a diameter to suit them. Upon these supposed facts Boerhaave built his hypothesis, that the cause of many diseases, is from the introduction of any given series of particles of blood, into a series of vessels to which they did not properly belong; and he distinguished such introduction by the name of *error loci.* Moreover, to the breaking down of these globules, or their heterogeneous admixture, he attributed a state of viscidity of the blood, which he distinguished by the name of *lentor*, and that from *lentor* and *error loci*, there proceed fever and disease—nor did he stop here. To the mechanical hypothesis just mentioned, he blended some of the chemical principles of the Humoralists, and of Silvius, of pretended acrimonies in the blood, which the physician according to him, ought to have constantly in view, in order to neutralize them: acrimonies which were long famous in the language of the schools, and which have descended in the language of common life even to our day. But Boerhaave until quite in the latter part of his life, seemed to ignore the controlling power which governed the living frame, the vital principle, or force residing in the nervous system. It was to Stahl, who was contemporary with Boerhaave, that the credit was due, of starting this loftier and more luminous idea; more luminous apparently from the light still struggling with darkness. Hoffman who was the colleague of Stahl, sublimed the ideas of Stahl, and presented to the world a more correct view of the nervous agency as a law of life in the general organization.

In the year 1740, in the small town of Hamilton in Lanarkshire, a country practice was carried on by young Dr. Cullen; he had a young man as pupil, with whom he made this curious sort of partnership. The chief object of the connection, was to enable each to pursue and improve his medical education; and they accordingly agreed, that they should alternately study, during the winter session, at some medical school, while the other should carry on the business for the common behoof. Cullen's turn came first, and he passed the winter at the Edinburgh University. The other whose name was William Hunter, on the other hand, chose London, where he thought he saw an opening to future fame, which ambition was fully realised in his own case, and through his agency, to a still higher degree in the case of his brother John; by mutual consent the deed of co-partnership was cancelled. Cullen was shortly after appointed Professor of Chemistry, first in Glasgow, and then in Edinburgh, and finally succeeded Dr. Gregory in 1770, in the chair of Practice of Physic, which he occupied until his death in 1790.

During the last quarter of the 18th century, the fame of the University of Edinburgh shone with its brightest lustre. Let us halt for a moment, and take a survey of our *Alma Mater*, and the Professors who then occupied her chairs. They were of an European celebrity. In the medical faculty within the College, the chief were Rutherford, the two Gregories (father and son), the two Monroes *(primus* and *secundus)*, Cullen, Black, and Duncan, and the midwifery Hamiltons, Alexander and James. Whilst outside in Surgeons' Square, Benjamin Bell, and John Bell, and just at the end of the century, his younger brother Charles taught surgery, and Barclay anatomy.

The chairs of Philosophy, letters, and Metaphysics, embraced the illustrious names of Adam Ferguson, Blair, Principal Robertson the historian, John Robison the natural philosopher, Playfair, and Dugald

Stewart, and others. During the period I am alluding to, Edinburgh Society was illumined by other Scottish worthies, not connected with the College, but closely associated in the same circles, and animated by a kindred philosophy, such men as Hutton the naturalist, Adam Smith, David Hume, James Watt, the novelists Home and Mc.Kenzie, the authors of the "Tragedy of Douglas," and the "Man of Feeling," Allan Ramsay the painter, and many distinguished lawyers and divines and men of letters.

At this period a new era was dawning upon the world. There was a boldness, originality and speculation in the works of these men ; the spirit of original research, and investigation had been awakened, and with a comprehensive bearing every branch of science being developed. A few years before arriving in this country, the impulse had been started in France, by the D'Alemberts, Diderots, and Voltaires, and the Encyclopœdists. Besides even at the beginning of the epoch which I have taken, that heaving and troubling of the waters over the ocean of political and social institutions in Europe, which preluded some few years the storm which exploded in 1789, at the same time surged over the bosom of science, and made a tremendous rift in the traditions, on which she had hitherto leaned.

In the distinguished circle, which I have mentioned, which at that time constituted Edinburgh society, Cullen was a man of mark and reputation, and the recognized head of the medical school. His prelections attracted numbers of pupils from all quarters. His lectures I believe were not written, but delivered *viva voce* from short notes merely, much in the same method as was pursued by his distinguished follower and admirer the late Dr. Alison. Cullen seeing the weak points of the Boerhaavian pathology, rejected it, particularly the humoral doctrines of the vitiation of the fluids, as a cause of disease, and ran into the opposite extreme of attributing more to the agency of the solids, and very little to the fluids of the body. He rather adopted as his basis the vitalism of Stahl and Hoffman, and on that erected a stately and elaborate system, so well known to the older practitioners of the present day, as that which swayed the medical world in their earlier years of study.

He ceased to regard the vital frame as a chemical apparatus, or a mechanical machine regulated only by the laws of inanimate matter. He taught that life was superintended by a nervous power, or *Energy*, seated in the brain, which power propagated to the moving fibres, produced contractions and motions.

But time will not afford to give even the briefest survey of his hypothesis, nor would it avail, for however much its ingenuity and masterly simplicity has been admired, its faults and defects, particularly his doctrine of *spasm* of the extreme vessels have been long since exposed by modern observation, which has caused the whole fabric to crumble and totter like the rest. But it is on the chaste finish of the architecture of his nosology, the temple as it were within which he ranges diseases, that the fame of Cullen rests. The three first divisions especially, I. Pyrexiæ or febrile diseases, II. Neuroses or nervous disorders, III. Cachexiæ or blood disorders, have formed the foundation of most modern classifications, and those of us who have had the advantage of having been taught by that great and amiable master, the late Dr. Alison, whose name I mention with deep reverence, will remember the emphasis with which that celebrated teacher impressed upon us, the brief and clear, but comprehensive and masterly definitions of disease of the great Dr. Cullen.

At the death of Cullen, we stand at an epoch in medicine ; but another epoch was close at hand. The huge wave of the French Revolution rose and fell with a thundering sweep over the order of European society, and in a chaos of scepticism and unbelief in all creeds, whether scientific, social, or sacerdotal, the 18th century closed, and so this brings us back again, towards the period to which our President alluded.

## II.

And now, gentlemen, I have finished the first part of my theme, our retrospective sketch of posterior times, limned out I fear with but a feeble hand. You have seen, and if I were to carry you forward for almost another generation from the point at which we have just stopped, you would still see, that medical science has been more or less swayed by systems or codes. Each has fretted its hour upon the stage, they have had their "exits and their entrances," and each in its zenith, has been applauded "to the very echo ;" each dogma has had its fervent disciples, not among the heedless multitude only, as now a days, but amongst students and philosophers, ambitious to scan nature's mysteries, and anxiously groping after absolute truth. The system which was thus set up upon a pedestal, by some intellectual authority, and worshipped for a time, and captivated for a generation or so, the imaginations of men, was rudely torn down by their successors, and out of the broken fragments of the former idol, some new theorist might succeed in forming a new one, probably not more substantial than the last, although out of the wreck of the old one, some particles of truth and reason might have been retained. In trying to pull out the mote in their brother's eye, they beheld not the beam that was in their own eye.

The cause of the fallacy of these systems was, that they were built up from too narrow a basis of facts and observations ; the process of reasoning was from the general to the particular, called in Logic the Deduction, or Ancient Logic.

The Inductive method, which is exclusively applied to our science in modern days, was of feeble growth. In the earlier stages of human knowledge the means of observation were inadequate, the physical facilities now familiar to the clinical observer were unknown ; chemical investigation, now so precise, then led to sophism and paradox,—even method of observation, except perhaps in morbid anatomy, was shallow, and inexact—moreover knowledge from want of facilities between different countries travelled with tardy steps, and often depended on oral information—hence facts and particulars accumulated but slowly, and the sure but tedious process of reasoning *à particulari ad universale* was unattainable.

Now the distinguishing feature of medicine in recent times, is its virtual renunciation of all exclusive systems, and its having ceased to pin its faith to the mere dicta of authorities.

I have no doubt, that had those attempts to elaborate general systems of medicine and therapeutics out of the dogmatic precepts of their founders, which we have seen in our own day, take the most notorious of them for example, Mesmerism, Homeopathy, or Hydropathy ; had these systems of opinion been propounded, I say, in the times of the 17th or 18th centuries, they might have been received with veneration as the offspring of science, elevated to a throne in physic,—and dominated over the empire of opinion, and ruled the practice of an age. But under the criticism of modern times, how subordinate has been their rôle, how vagrant their existence, smuggled as it were, under the skirts of the robe of Medicine, notwithstanding the extravagant assertions of a Mesmer, the mock philosophy of a Hahnneman, the mercenary prescience of a Preistnitz, backed by the exuberant zeal of a thoughtless crowd, always ready for some new thing, and the well-known propagandism inherent to all converts to any heterodoxy.

The serpent is said to wind round the titular rod of Esculapius, and it is but just to say, that he still preserves the typical attribute of wisdom, and turns a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. For hypotheses, as hypotheses,—systems as systems—we will have no more of them; no more *à priori* reasonings, no more deductions nor dogmas from a limited series of facts. In a profession such as ours, in which of necessity prevails so much the consideration of the *res augusti domi*, and the need of money making, and to which object it is commonly believed, that a little *éclât*, and notoriety conduce, it is not to be wondered at, that we constantly hear, and will hear, of new views as to treatment and final causes of disease, and even of system mongers and theorists, "rushing in where angels fear to tread," or as has been said in one sarcastic line,—

> "Holding their farthing candle to the sun."

But it is unjust to say, that we are an obstructive profession. Medicine is far from being an exact science; it is eminently tentative, and experimental: and the whole history of it in recent days, shows that it is undeniably progressive. We are not obstructive, not even rigidly conservative. You will excuse me, if I use a phrase of the day, and say, that we are liberal conservatives, taking the term in its general signification, not unless you choose politically, (for that is another question,) but in reference to medical progress.

Many illustrations might come to hand to show, how the practice in different diseases has been tacitly changed by the body of the profession, in deference to a juster pathology and improved knowledge of final causes, gained in recent times. I will take for example, as being the most apt one that occurs to me at the moment,—the treatment of acute articular rheumatism; this rheumatic fever, was once called arthritis, to mark that it was one of the phlegmasiæ, or inflammatory diseases, as indeed it is. Hence by our ancestors, and predecessors, nay even by ourselves, in our early days, the whole of the antiphlogistic *armentaria* were demanded for its treatment, almost as if it had been a pleurisy or pneumonia—we must most of us have witnessed large, and even repeated bleedings in this disease, as well as the exhibition of mercury and opium and antimony. Now an improved pathology has shewn, that the train of strong febrile symptoms which characterize the general disorder, is not the consequence of the local inflammation in the joints, but on the contrary, the local inflammations are the consequences of the general disorder. In fact it has been satisfactorily proved, and admitted by the profession, that in rheumatic fever, the blood is poisoned by the retention in it, of some morbific element, and that the signs and results of inflammation which we notice in the joints, and on the serous membranes elsewhere, are but the local manifestations, of the irritation produced by the poisonous matter circulating in the blood. Hence the treatment has been changed, and with the best results. It became evident, that no amount of venesection could evacuate the *materies morbi*, and that we must seek for a remedy in some agent, which would enter into the circulation, and directly neutralize the pernicious ingredient which it met with there—a knowledge of the nature of the poisonous matter itself, reasonably, led to the experimental employment of alkalies, for the lithiasis ; and the result has been, that in the salts of potash in large doses, we have found a very satisfactory remedy in the treatment of a large proportion of cases in this disease.

As I have said then, modern medicine relies on inductive reasoning ; and on observation, and experiment.

We have seen in our day, the manifold and ingenious physical aids to our senses, which have been enlisted in medical research, one after another, and the amazing amount of labour and devotion, which have been bestowed on observations by such means. So that, not only is proficiency in the use of such instruments indispensable to us, but also is a careful study of the writings of those who have dedicated themselves to these different departments of observation required, by all who would keep abreast of the more rational view of disease processes, now prevailing. Etiology, diagnosis, and the history of disease, are assuming more and more the certainty and exactitude of a science.

But with all our science, are we improving in the branch of therapeutics, which must be held to be to a great extent tentative and empirical ; in fine in the art of healing, for that is the question which affects the sick man ?

Is there not a manifest danger in us regarding too exclusively the lesions and results of diseased action, as made known to us by our means of physical diagnosis, and reposing too confidently on the powers of nature, or an expectant treatment only, if we overlook the succession of symptoms which precede these marked and appreciable consequences ; which symptoms it was the object of our predecessors to treat, often times perhaps too vigorously ; but for which, in my opinion, we have resources in our art, and time-honoured remedies, which it is too much the fashion of the day to undervalue ?

According to the principles of a modern school of medicine, emanating in the first instance from the Vienna physicians, of which school, Dr. Hughes Bennet has been the chief exponent in this country, it is held ; that the exudation of the liquor sanguinis, or deposit of coagulable lymph, is the essence and necessity of inflammation, and without which event inflammation cannot exist ; and further, that this effusion is to be considered in the light of a reparative process, by which nature obviates both local, and general mischief,—and moreover, that the sound treatment thereof, is the opposite and antagonistic to the antiphlogistic,—and that the principles which have hitherto guided practitioners in their attempts to cut short internal inflammations by bleeding, are erroneous, and not in harmony with the present advanced state of pathology.

But however much we may admire the beautiful observations on inflammation, of Virchow, Lister, Bennet, and those on the reparative process, or cell therapeutics by Addison, Paget, and others, and regard with interest the material products, and results of these processes as manifested in the extreme tissues, which they have seen and depicted ; yet we must hold, that there is concerned at all events in the early stages of inflammation, a series of strictly vital actions, which can neither be seen nor measured ; and it would be erroneous in us, to concede to the deductions drawn from morbid anatomy merely, and the microscopic study of these products and effects, as has been ventured by this new school ; a system of therapeutics directly opposed in principle to that which we call the antiphlogistic, and which regards false the experience of practitioners, since medicine has been made a subject of reflection to mankind.

It was the discussion of this question which you may remember, formed the ground of the warm controversy which took place twelve years ago in Edinburgh, and which drew forth from such clinical authorities as Alison, Christison, and Watson, and I may say the majority of the foremost men in the profession, the expression of their convictions of the orthodoxy, and efficacy of Blood letting, as a remedial agent in acute inflammations. It was admitted on all sides as an undeniable fact, that the lancet is infinitely less called into requisition now than formerly ; but it was maintained by the above-named veteran physicians, that their long experience had enabled them to observe that certain acute diseases had changed their type during the last 40 years—that inflammation presented now less of the sthenic and more of the typhoid character, and that the urgent symptoms which impelled them to bleed, are more rarely seen now than formerly.

But the upholders of the expectant method of treatment pretend, that it is the recognition of this "advanced pathology," and the influence of an improved diagnosis that have caused us to repudiate the old treatment, and they affect to deride the notion of change of type in diseases ; inferring that as the human frame has been always the same, and is governed by the same physiological laws, that the morbid processes must have presented invariably, and from all time, the same train of symptoms, and terminated in the same physical changes and results.

But within the experience of my present hearers even, (and there are none among you who can be called old men,) how many new diseases have we not seen, or at all events diseases of exotic origin, and unknown to the inhabitants of this country for generations. The cholera morbus, the epidemic influenza, the relapsing fever of 1844, the diphtheria, and amongst cattle, the pleuro pneumonia and the plague, and in the vegetable kingdom, the potato disease, and the grape oïdium. But even setting aside the zymotic group, we must have noticed variations and special tendencies even in inflammatory diseases, to changes of type in different seasons, and in different constitutions, and in different localities. How rare it is for example, to meet with now, idiopathic, or even puerperal peritonitis ; how seldom we have croup with membranous exudation, independent of diphtheria ; pleurisies of a less acute character than formerly, but more of a subacute or chronic form, with a tendency rather to serous effusion, than to coagulable lymph—in my experience of late years, a diminution in number of those cases of violent articular rheumatism, constituting rheumatic fever, and less often tending now to affection of the fibrous structure of the heart. On the contrary in regard to frequency, the increased annual average of cases of pneumonia, many of these undoubtedly amongst the inhabitants of towns, and in the debilitated and the aged, with but slight of the sthenic characters of the disease, with but little cough, pain, dyspnœa, or inflammatory fever, but rather of a low form, and tending to the so-called typhoid state, and not requiring bleeding, but doing well under an expectant, or do-nothing treatment, and even moderate stimulation. But accustomed as I am, in the course of my practice in this country, to see the disease early in a population renowned for their vigour, robust temperament, of active habits, living primitive and healthy lives, removed from the pernicious influences of towns, and the evil habits of the day ; amongst such constitutions, I affirm as the result of my experience, that I find pneumonia sometimes showing to the full, the sthenic character, as described by Cullen and Gregory. And moreover I assert most positively my conviction, of the benefit under such circumstances, of a full bleeding within the first three days, a benefit by giving relief to the breathing at the moment, " even when the blood is flowing," in mitigating the violent symptoms, relieving the distressing sensations, adding to the comfort, and promoting the recovery of the patient.

The art of therapeutics is probably after all, merely suffering a natural revulsion from the sanguinary days of Broussais and Bouillaud, which culminated about 1830 ; and the days of excessive routine physic of our immediate predecessors. It should be our care however, to allow our art, neither to be swayed unduly by the influence of fashion, nor by supreme eclectism, nor by our loss of faith, to be shorn of that attribute which lends a charm to its practice, and by which alone it is technically estimated by the world, viz., its power of healing.

It had been my intention, to have referred to another noble feature in modern medical progress, viz., its application towards the prevention of disease—in which direction in the future we may look for its greatest influence. In sanatory measures for the abatement of epidemics,—in the destruction within and without the body, of miasmatic, and zymotic poisons, in hygiene—in prophylactic precautions and treatment, in diet and food medicines, in combatting the tendency to those degenerations of tissues and of organs, the fatty, the osseous, and the albuminoid, which enter so largely into the causation of mortality at the present day.

But the hour warns me that I must close. One word in conclusion. To-day, we are observers. Probably at no period in the history of our art, has there been a more numerous, or a more patient, trustworthy, intelligent, eager phalanx, of labourers after truth, than is presented by the medical profession at the present moment.

Men of all ages, and temperaments,—of every variety of attainment and capability, may be found anxiously engaged in probing the mysteries of nature, even in her minutest ramifications ; in watching the development of a cell growth, in determining the infinitesimal variation in a proximate principle in some animal excretion, in the daily records of temperature to the tenth of a degree in the thermometer, in some febrile disease ; and so do these busy workers bring to the hive of knowledge, each their increment, culled with patient care in their diverse paths, a tiny addition it may be, but if true never despicable, but always welcome to swell the basis of a general law.

Better far better for us all to be simple observers than hasty generalizers.

"Non cuivis homini continget adire Corinthum."

To all of us is given the faculty of observation—to all of us as practitioners, is accorded a sphere of action—all of us possess more or less the ordinary power of telling or recording what we see, or hear, or feel—and to all of us in all probability our experience has revealed some fact or succession of facts, which might be worth imparting to our cotemporaries,—instead of dying with the individual.

I consider, that one of the benefits of the establishment of this local Association, apart altogether from connection with the parent society, is, that for the first time in this district, so far as I know, it has opened out an opportunity for practitioners of medicine assembling together ; one of the professed objects of which periodical gatherings is, and one which I regard as the most important, that there shall be intercommunion and discussion amongst us, of the results of our medical observation and experience.

THE END.

* * *